

Get Smart: A Study in Proverbs

Study #8: Wisdom in Parenting

One could easily say that the whole book of Proverbs is a book on parenting. As we have already seen, much of the character of this book is advice given from parent to child. Look no further than the first line after the prologue.

Proverbs 1:8 *Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.*

As such all the advice given in the book would be appropriate material for a parent to teach a child. Of course not all of it would be applicable to young children. However, the role of the parent does not end when the child is grown.

Aside from this, we also see that the book of Proverbs gives some direct instruction to parents and children.

Wise Parents Train their Children

Perhaps most obviously, wise parents spend time instructing their children. In fact, few things in life bring more satisfaction than seeing one's child grow up to be wise and to live well.

Proverbs 10:1 *The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.*

Proverbs 17:21 *To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool.*

Proverbs 20:11 *Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.*

Proverbs 22:6 *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

Proverbs 23:15-16 *My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; 16 my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.*

Wise Parents Discipline their Children

Proverbs has much to say about the importance of discipline. It makes frequent mention of corporal punishment.

- Proverbs 13:24 *He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*
- Proverbs 19:18 *Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.*
- Proverbs 22:15 *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.*
- Proverbs 23:13-14 *Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.*
- Proverbs 29:15 *The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.*
- Proverbs 29:17 *Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*

Wise Parents Set a Spiritual Example.

It is the clear teaching of Proverbs that wisdom is found in fearing God. As parents, we should thus set a spiritual example to our children. If we want them to be wise, we in turn must model wisdom. Notice how Proverbs teaches that children benefit from the spirituality of their parents.

- Proverbs 14:26 *He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.*
- Proverbs 20:7 *The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.*

Wise Children Listen to their Parents

Proverbs also has advice for children with respect to their parents. As parents are called to train their children, children are called to listen to their parents.

Proverbs 1:8-9 *Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. 9 They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.*

Proverbs 3:1-2 *My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, 2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.*

Proverbs 5:12-14 *You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! 13 I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. 14 I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly."*

Proverbs 13:1 *A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.*

Proverbs 15:32 *He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.*

Applying this to our Relationship with God

Given that God is our Father, much of this can be applied spiritually to our relationship with God. In fact proverbs directly instructs us to submit to God's discipline.

Proverbs 3:11-12 *My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, ¹²because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*